

# WORKFORCE FOCUS

## People With a Disability

In the coming years, Washington will face an increasing shortage of skilled workers. Growth in the size of the labor force is slowing as the baby boom generation moves into retirement. During the 1990s, Washington's labor force grew at an annual rate of 1.8 percent. During the current decade, this rate will slow to 1.3 percent, and from 2010 to 2020, it will drop to only 0.9 percent.

Part of the solution to the coming labor shortage should come from preparing people with a disability who constitute an important underutilized human resource, and, in the past, have been underrepresented in the workforce at large.

According to the U.S. 2000 Census, 606,000 Washingtonians aged 21 to 64 have one or more disabilities,

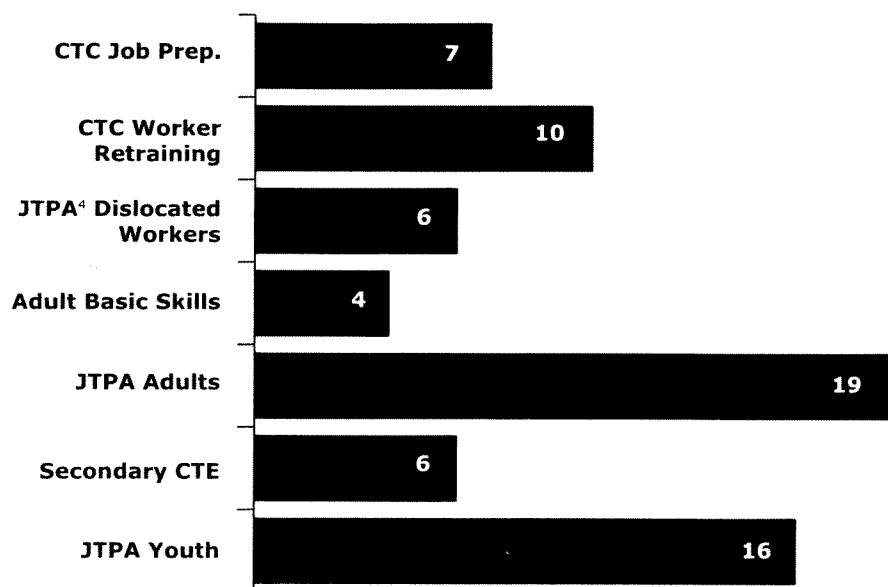
17.8 percent.<sup>1</sup> Only 58 percent of this population is employed compared to 78 percent without a disability. Moreover, many people with a disability who have jobs are not employed to their full potential. According to a 1996 survey of 2,500 Washington citizens with a disability, a third of those employed said their jobs do not use their skills well.

Research on how well Washington's workforce development system is preparing people with a disability indicates that:<sup>2</sup>

- The number of people with a disability who participate in a workforce development program varies considerably (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

FIGURE 1

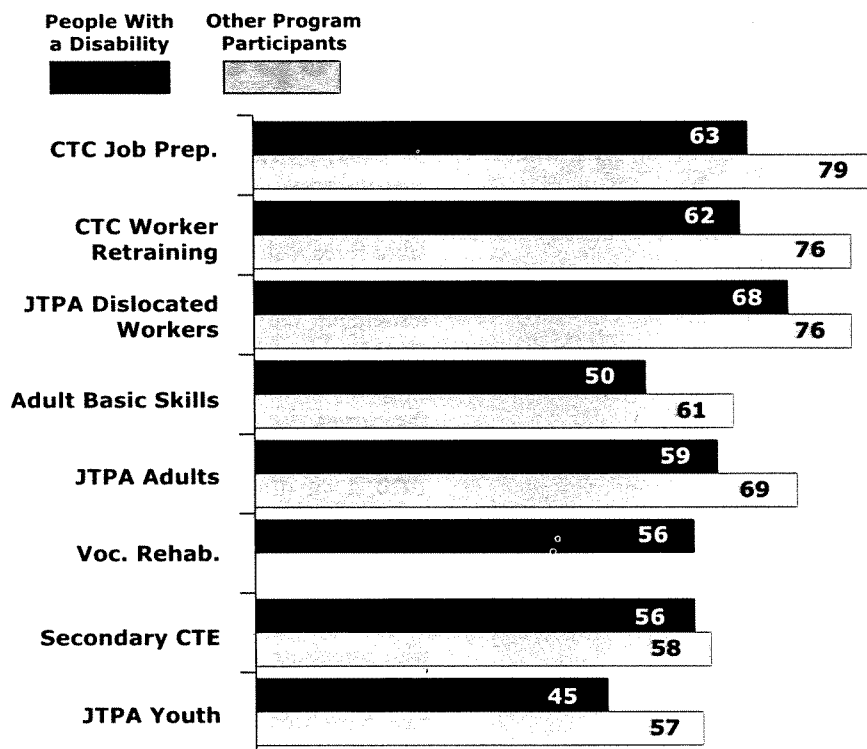
### Percentage of People With a Disability in Workforce Development Programs



- People with a disability have much lower employment rates than other program participants (Figure 2),<sup>5</sup> and the difference is among the largest found in any of the outcomes for any of the target populations.
- Only 20 percent of secondary career and technical education students with a disability go on to further education compared to 45 percent of other secondary CTE students.
- People with a disability earn less per hour and per annum than those without a disability (Figures 3 and 4) except those enrolled in secondary CTE, where annual earnings are slightly higher for former students with a disability.
- People with a disability have mixed reactions to workforce development programs (Figure 5).

**FIGURE 2**

**Employment Rates of People With a Disability After Workforce Development Programs**  
(Percentage employed during third quarter after leaving the program)



**FIGURE 3**

**Hourly Wages of People With a Disability After Workforce Development Programs**  
(Median based on third quarter after leaving the program)

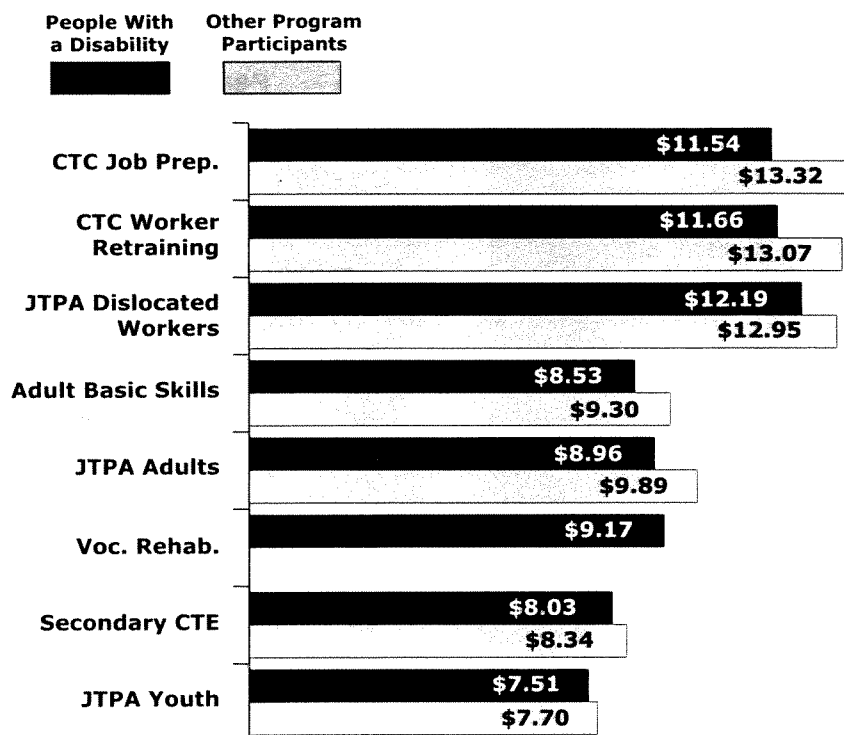


FIGURE 4

### Annual Earnings of People With a Disability After Workforce Development Programs

(Median based on third quarter after leaving the program)

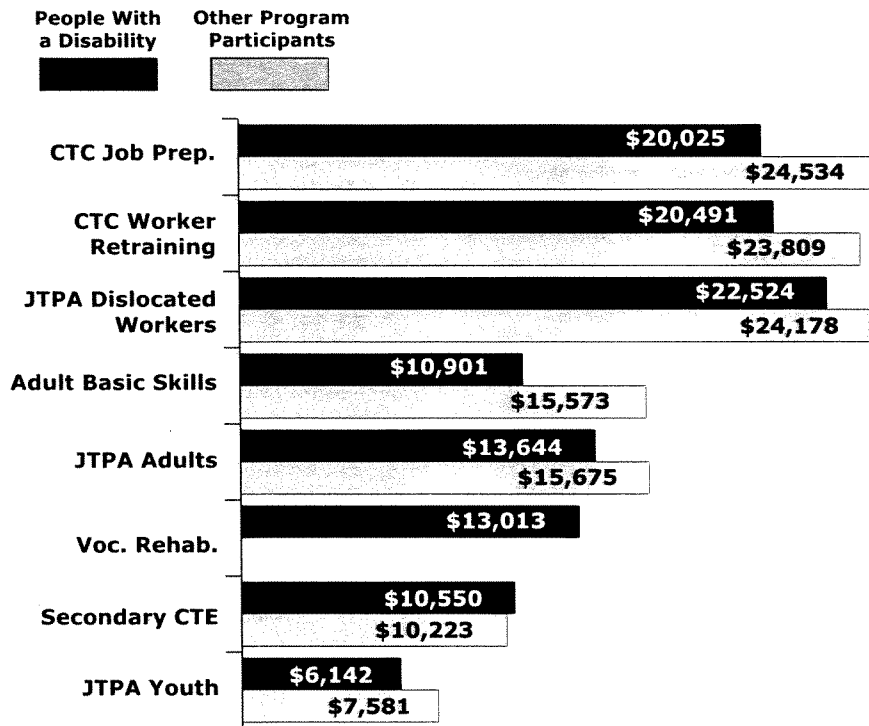
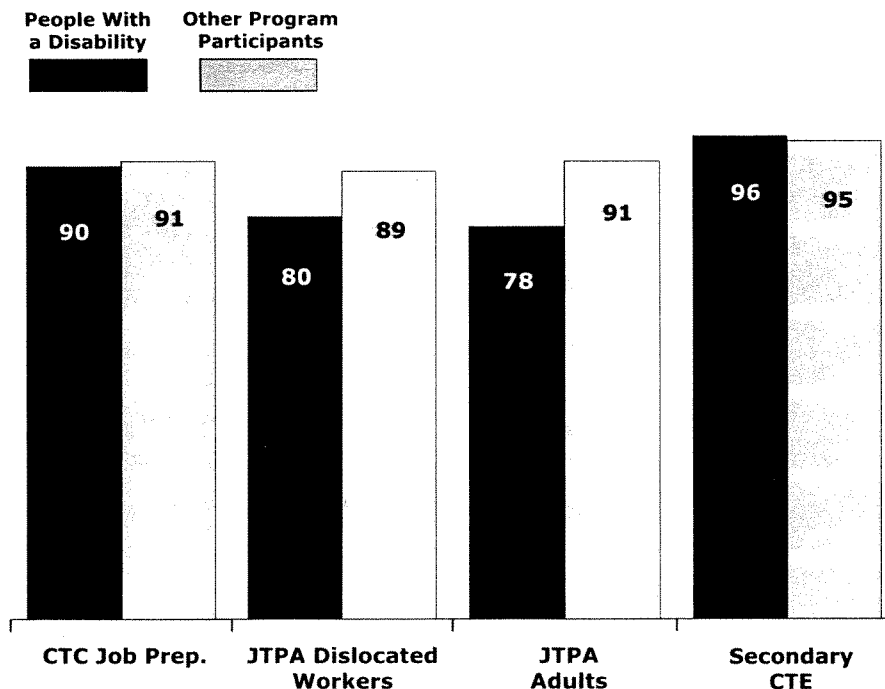


FIGURE 5

### Percentage of People With a Disability Satisfied With Workforce Development Programs



### Glossary

#### Community and Technical Colleges Job Preparatory

(CTC Job Prep.) provides training and education for a Vocational Associate of Arts degree or a vocational certificate.

**Private Career Schools** are operated by private businesses for students intending to complete vocational certificates or degrees.

**Apprenticeships** combine classroom instruction with paid, on-the-job training under supervision of a journey-level craftsman or trade professional.

**Worker Retraining at Community and Technical Colleges** (CTC Worker Retraining) provides dislocated workers and long-term unemployed with access to job retraining.

**Job Training Partnership Act Dislocated Workers** (JTPA Dislocated Workers) was a federal employment and training program for dislocated workers replaced by the Workforce Investment Act.

**Adult Basic Skills Education** (Adult Basic Skills) provides literacy and math instruction for adults.

**Job Training Partnership Act Adults** (JTPA Adults) was a federal employment and training program for low-income adults replaced by the Workforce Investment Act.

**Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation** (Voc. Rehab.) offers services to help individuals with disabilities become employed.

**Secondary Career and Technical Education** (Secondary CTE) is training and vocational education in high schools.

**Job Training Partnership Act Youth** (JTPA Youth) was a federal employment and training program for low-income youth 16 to 21 replaced by the Workforce Investment Act.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> According to the 2000 Census (<[www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/disdef00.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/disdef00.html)>), 17.8 percent of Washington adults 21 to 64 years of age and 12.1 percent of youth 16 to 20 years of age have some type of disability. The Census asked "if the individual had a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting six months or more that made it difficult to perform certain activities." The four activity categories were: (a) learning, remembering, or concentrating (mental disability); (b) dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home (self-care disability); (c) going outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor's office (going outside the home disability); and (d) working at a job or business (employment disability).

<sup>2</sup> For data sources, methodology, and program description see *Workforce Training Results 2002* from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. We caution against making comparisons among the programs: the populations served, the types of services provided, and lengths of training vary substantially from program to program.

<sup>3</sup> The participation rates are based on how many participants each program recorded as being disabled. The programs did not necessarily use the same definition as the 2000 Census.

<sup>4</sup> The Workforce Investment Act replaced the Job Training Partnership Act on July 1, 2000. In order to have sufficient time to follow postprogram employment and earnings, the data here is based on participants who exited between July 1, 1999, and June 30, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Employment rates are based only on employment recorded in Employment Security Department records in Washington and other northwest states, thereby understating the actual rate of employment by about 10 percentage points. The rates are for all program participants, not just those who completed the program.

## Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

### Mission

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's mission is to bring business, labor, and the public sector together to shape strategies to best meet the state and local workforce and employer needs of Washington in order to create and sustain a high-skill, high-wage economy.

To fulfill this Mission, Board members, with the support of staff, work together to:

- Advise the Governor and Legislature on workforce development policy.
- Promote an integrated system of workforce development that responds to the lifelong learning needs of the current and future workforce.
- Advocate for the nonbaccalaureate training and education needs of workers and employers.
- Facilitate innovations in workforce development policy and practices.
- Ensure system quality and accountability by evaluating results and supporting high standards and continuous improvement.

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